

Grace Lutheran Church
Council Minutes
April 19, 2025

Members present: Pastor Gabrielle Brown, Penny Carr, Karleen Cotton, Courtney Graham, Lorinda Laabs, Anne Reed, Ginny Ruths, Natalie Ruths, Jenny Staack-Kennerty (via Zoom), and Randy White.
Guests: Sydney Lachman, Nancy Tindell.

Opening: Meeting called to order at 10:00 am.

Pastor Gabrielle opened with prayer, thanking God for the opportunity to be together and do God's work.

Jenny led an Easter devotion: We don't need to worry, instead we should remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Minutes: Randy made the motion to approve the minutes as corrected, Karleen seconded. Motion passed.

Financials: March was a good month although not as good as we hoped. Did receive around \$100 over expenses, but didn't take in enough to put full amount back in savings. Only received \$10 toward Property on April 14, but had large property expense bills for boiler and elevator work that had been pushed out for many years. Lots of expenses that show up in first quarter, next quarter should look better. People don't always realize what expenses go into keeping our property functioning, Jenny suggested putting expenses in bulletin so the congregation can see how much the upkeep is and let them know that we need specific donations to Property fund.

Natalie made the motion to approve the financial statements, Anne seconded. Motion passed.

Pastor's report: Pastor Gabrielle provided a brief oral report. She will be out of the office next week for Region 2 First Call Conference. Most of her time and energy recently have been going into Lent devotions and Easter preparations. Due to weather, she was unable to do Ash Wednesday service outside as hoped. She would still like to do some outside services this summer, weather permitting.

Coffee with the Pastor is not really taking off. Idea was to do drop-in discussions, held in a public space, but timing and parking may problems. Mornings may not be convenient for members. Perhaps a different location would also work better: A coffee shop is nearby, close to Helen Hunt Elementary School, and has parking just a couple blocks from the church. With previous sessions, Pastor Kelsey had a better turnout around 4:30. Perhaps moving to afternoon time and better location will increase interest/participation.

Old business:

Aesthetics update – Discussion on having Grace banners (rather than current OSL and Bethany). Current banners are 3x5 or 4x6. Sydney provided handouts demonstrating options from two different providers. Better sizing options from Praise Banners – printed on silk, lots of design and sizing options. AT proposes starting with green design for Normal Time, then can look at others if the quality is satisfactory. Praise Banners has several themed collections to maintain consistent style and look. Can also make custom banners if we want to design our own. Vote will be for council to approve the expenditure of one set including two banners plus pulpit scarves. Gift Team (Natalie, Teresa Felton, Ev Church) can provide some funds if team provides exact costs. Money has been donated specifically for white banners (high holy days – Easter, Christmas, Christ the King).

Nancy doesn't want the banners to be any higher because she won't be able to hang them up. After consolidation, decisions on which ones to put up were made on what they look like, not what church they came from. Randy said if they're old, we should get new ones. Jenny has an outsider perspective – moving forward as a combined church is what's important now, continuing to build the community of Grace, getting rid of baggage to bring us together. Especially appropriate for 15th anniversary. Penny asked whether we can justify the cost since existing ones are still in good shape. Randy made a motion that we have Aesthetics Team buy one set of new banners for green season 3x5 or close ASAP. Jenny seconded. Penny asked how many people who expressed negative opinions on new banners during consolidation are no longer here. Most people remaining feel it's time to move on.

Previous banner team had new red Grace/Reformation and blue Advent designs made. Question was raised whether the quilters could make some, but they are not interested in creating them because they are difficult to make. Proposed options are reasonable cost. Banner that hangs on side wall gets extremely dirty from heater. Karleen suggested getting a green set and rotating between new and existing. Anne said WELCA may be able to help cover cost. Would be nice to have continuity with all banners; we can keep current ones for use elsewhere such as fellowship hall. Possibly present collections to congregations to help choose which set.

Pastor Gabrielle amended the motion to request that the AT identify three collections for congregation to vote on before purchasing banners. Penny seconded the amendment. Ginny asked whether we would get three banners (two for east wall and one for south wall) or just two. Lorinda suggested we get one of the stained glass ones for the south wall that wouldn't change as often. We should have three banners plus altar scarf and paraments – two scarves that hang over front of altar, plus two paraments for lectern. Amendment to the motion passed. Amended motion to buy new banners passed.

We don't need to get rid of functional banners, but can we get rid of ones that are old and falling apart and can't be cleaned. Karleen made a motion that we get rid of old banners; Penny seconded. At Pastor Gabrielle's request, Karleen withdrew her motion. Pastor Gabrielle made a motion that we review all banners to see which ones are no longer usable, hold a service to deconsecrate them, and then dispose of them; Karleen seconded. Jenny asked if they could be given to quilters for use. Natalie suggested we take photos of them for historical record and perhaps have AT take pieces of old banners to make a collage.

Property update – No word yet on parking lot repair/resurfacing to fill in cracks, waiting for a break in weather. They will give us a good deal but can no longer put it under warranty, so we will have to pay for treatment. After resurfacing, we will also need to repaint lines. Prefer to have repair done on Saturday to accommodate people from Memorial who park in our lot.

Randy got a bid of \$8,000 to replace the yard sign except for the pedestal. Randy prefers to have Property Team do repairs rather than replacing it. He has found a local supplier for white plexiglass. Discussion on putting logo on. Ginny and Randy looked at the space available in the existing top panel and feel the logo may be large enough for good visibility.

RIC Team – Meeting for Reconciling Works on Thursday to answer questions, talk about new requirements for RIC statement so we can update before January 1. Already have BIPOC in our welcome statement and need to include antiracism/commitment to racial equity/commitment to affirmation. Working with Affirm 365 to participate in PRIDE with St. Michaels Episcopal, Christ the King, Pastor Paula, Bethel Mennonite, First Christian. Have a booth but not signed up for parade yet, Natalie will ask First Congregational Church if we can participate with them. Parade is June 15, celebration is Sat-Sun June 14-15. Booth will be staffed all weekend in two-hour blocks. Training from Pikes Peak PRIDE –

how to set up/take down, how to talk to people. Training is week before PRIDE weekend. St. Michael's will front cost for booth up to \$250 (incl. cost for PRIDE insurance). Thrivent also has grants for \$250 for flags and swag. Participating as partner of Affirm 365. Booth will have activities like rock painting and button making, plus literature to request more info from specific churches. Making stickers with each church's logo – so far only cost we will incur. Also may make PRIDE bracelets because beads are cheap. Have pastor business cards available, with pastors available to attend but not sign up to allow more flexibility. Gabrielle will not be here that weekend but will work with supply pastor for PRIDE liturgy.

Growing Grace – Will have ministry fair on next fifth Sunday, June 29, in place of GG forum discussion. Lorinda will see about getting boards out to teams by first of June. Invite neighborhood, put notice on sign about fair to include local community.

WELCA update – Donations for ONWT and WSC have fallen off because people don't know where to put in-kind donations. Need to put signage up to tell people where boxes are. Make announcement on Sunday, include notice in Grace Notes and *GTJ*. Entry change was due to COVID, started using different doors. Start using terms west narthex as Welcome Center and east narthex as Ministry Center for WCS, ONWT, Blessing Box, pill bottles, pop tops collection baskets.

Anne reported on concerns that people have. Wagon in the closet is a problem for those who need to use it, difficult to get in and out. Possibly move it to east narthex, in alcove by window. Concerns are mostly awareness/change of habit/communication issue. Need to talk with Lorraine Ramsey, others who use baskets. Anne will apologize to her for lack of communication.

Activities including sanctuary clean-up and breakfast at Perkins coming up.

Easter breakfast – Donations will go to World Hunger Lenten Appeal for well instead of Grace general fund, and be matched by GraceFull Fund with collection board set up at door. Bring hot foods by 8:00-8:15. Hand out kids' Easter treat bags at breakfast. Gabrielle will hide alleluia letters for kids to hunt for during children's sermon. People can help clean up as available. Nancy says make sure ovens are turned off!

Ministry fair – On hold until after Easter, will be held in June.

Delegates for Synod assembly – Margie Ainsworth and Theresa Felton are registered. Pastor Gabrielle will go to Albuquerque a few days early for the Immigrant Accompaniment Summit session.

New business:

Constitution – Ginny made recommendations on updating the constitution/bylaws to comply with new Reconciling Works requirements and clean up a few other issues of concern. Jenny offered to make recommendations to Karleen, Lorinda, and Gabrielle regarding financial questions. Further discussion to come, with approval from congregation required.

Next meeting: Saturday, May 17, at 10:00 am. Courtney is on the schedule for devotions. Randy will be excused for trip to Ireland.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm, closed with Lord's Prayer.

Minutes taken by Ginny Ruths, Council secretary